

**CRYPSIS ACULEATA (L.) AIT. (POACEAE)—NEW RECORD FOR INDIA**

*Crypsis* is distributed in India in the arid region from Pakistan, Sind, N. W. India—Funjab, Kashmir to Madhya Pradesh, Bundelkhand. So far specimens from Rajasthan desert have been assigned to the species, namely, *C. schoenoides* Lam. However, examination of some specimens from Barmer, N. W. Rajasthan, which is an extension of the Sind desert, turned out to be *C. aculeata* (L.) Ait., a hitherto unknown species in India. The specimen due to its shorter and broader raceme, two upper most leaf-sheaths, longer lemma than glumes is referable to *C. aculeata* (L.) Ait., an arid species so far recorded from Afganistan and Iran in the Western Asia. Its occurrence in Rajasthan desert is not unexpected as some other desert taxa in recent years also have been reported from the area. A short description with nomenclature is given for easy identification of the taxa concerned.

**Etymology :** The name of the genus *Crypsis* has been derived from Greek word *Kryptos* which means hidden or concealed, an illusion to the inflorescence which is enclosed in upper most leaf sheaths.

**Key to the species**

- I. Inflorescence a capitulum, broader than long ; spikelets 3-4 mm long ; lemma longer than glumes ... .. *C. aculeata*
- II. Inflorescence ellipsoidal, longer than broad ; spikelets 2-3.5 mm long ; lemma equal or shorter than glumes ... .. *C. schoenoides*

***Crypsis aculeata*** (L.) Ait., Hort. Kew, ed : 1 : 48, 1789 ; Fl. Egypt, 1 : 349, 1941 ; Bor in Rech. f. Fl. Lowland Iraq : 100, 1964.

**Syn :** *Schoenus aculeatus* L., Sp. pl. ed. 1 : 42 : 1753.

An annual prostrate herb with many stems. Stems upto 20 cm long, smooth or glabrous. Leaf blades flat, ca 5 cm × 4 mm, hairy on both the surfaces. Inflorescence capitulura (raceme) supported by two uppermost inflated leaf-sheaths, bearing short pungent blades. Spikelets 3-4 mm long. Lemma longer than glumes, ± 4 mm. Anthers - 2. Palea 2 newed (Fig. 1).

Rozhevits & Shishkim (1934) observed that this grass is relished by livestock. According to Bor (1968) this grass was first introduced in South Africa during the world war in 1914-1918 as a fodder grass.

**Specimen examined :** G. L. Tiwari 1140, Barmer, Rajasthan. (CAL.).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

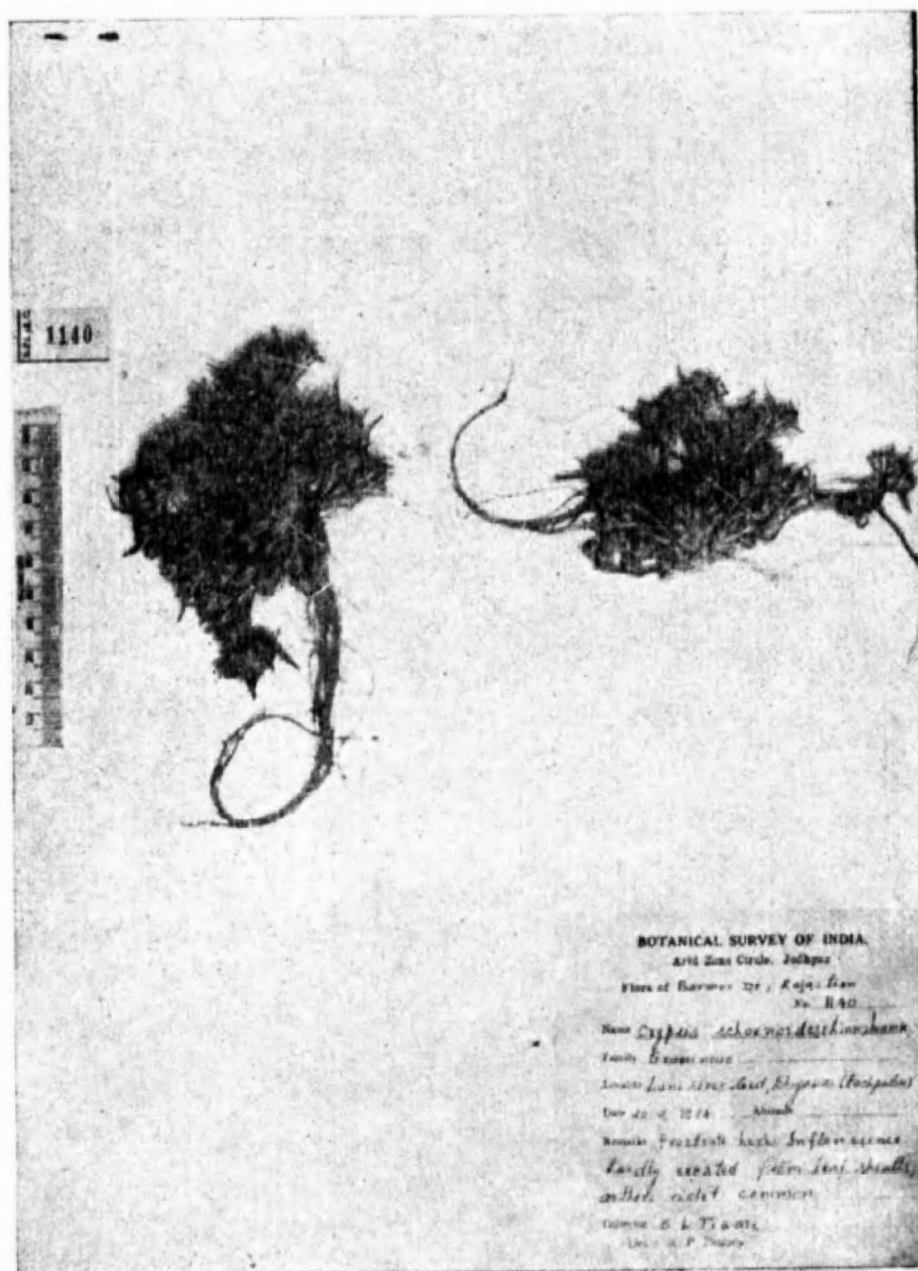
The author is grateful to the Director and Joint Director, Botanical Survey of India for providing necessary facilities to do this work.

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Fig. 1: *Crypsis aculeata* (Linn.) Ait.